

Coins

The mint mark floats on the Lincoln cent

By Roger Boye

HERE ARE SOME questions from the numismatic mailbox — with, hopefully, some helpful answers.

Q—I started collecting Lincoln pennies about two years ago for a Cub Scout project. I've noticed that, on some of my coins, the "D" mint mark is very close to the date. On others, there is more space between the date and mint mark. Is this unusual? — B.H., Evanston.

A—No. The mint mark is hand-punched into the dies that are used to make coins. As a result, there is often some slight variation in the location of the mint mark.

Q—I have a \$50 and a \$100 bill, both 1928 series, that read: "Redeemable in gold on demand at the United States Treasury, or in gold or lawful money at any Federal Reserve Bank." Both bills are brand new. Where can I go to get some gold? — D.C., Gary.

A—Your bills no longer may be redeemed for gold, although they are still lawful money. However, you wouldn't want to spend them since they are both collector's items. Dealers sell uncirculated specimens of the Federal Reserve notes you describe for about double face value, according to currency catalogs.

Q—One of my most unusual coins is an old half-dollar my grandfather gave me. It is dated

1918 and shows Lincoln on one side and an eagle on the other. Can you tell me anything about this coin, such as its value? — P.C., Chicago.

A—You have a half-dollar issued in 1918 to commemorate the Illinois Centennial. (Illinois was the first state to have a commemorative half-dollar issued by the United States Mint for a centennial.) The image of Lincoln is taken from a statue in Springfield, and the design of the eagle on the reverse side is based on the Illinois state seal. Dealers sell this coin for about \$50 in uncirculated condition.

The U.S. Mint no longer makes commemorative half-dollars, although many such coins were issued during the first half of this century.